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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001251

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: KASHALA SEES HIMSELF AS CONGO'S NEW
"POWER BROKER"

REF: A. KINSHASA 1231

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 972

[1](#)C. KINSHASA 927

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Oscar Kashala is declaring himself an "emerging leader" and "power broker" capable of deciding the eventual winner of the Congo's presidency. Basing his claims on an apparently strong showing in the Kasai provinces and in Kinshasa, Kashala said he will come in third behind President Joseph Kabila and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba. Should a second round of presidential balloting come down to these two candidates, Kashala predicted there will be "serious problems" and violence between the two sides. Kashala said he is waiting to see the final results, but warned that "grave issues" and "irregularities" marked voting operations. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Oscar Kashala, one of the DRC's 33 presidential candidates in the July 30 elections, met August 4 with Rep-D. Payne and poloff to discuss the post-election atmosphere and his thoughts on the outcome of the vote. Kashala, absent any official results from the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), claimed he was running a strong third nationwide in presidential voting behind President Kabila and Vice President Bemba. Kashala said he had won both Kasai provinces by "heavy margins," was coming in second in Lubumbashi, and was running third in Kinshasa. Kashala claimed his campaign's internal numbers even showed that while he was trailing President Kabila overall, he was winning nearly as many votes as Vice President Bemba. Kashala said voting trends showed that no candidate would win an outright majority in the first round of balloting, and that Kabila and Bemba were likely to face off in a second round. Given what he claimed is his strong showing throughout the country, Kashala said he was going to be the Congo's "power broker" in the next round of voting.

[1](#)3. (C) Kashala explained that his campaign had started off with many problems and difficulties, including the detention and expulsion of some of his security consultants and legal advisers (refs B and C). As a result, Kashala said he was unable to deploy campaign staff throughout the country, ultimately limiting his operations. Nonetheless, he claimed his political alliance -- the Union for the Reconstruction of the Congo (UREC) -- fielded the second largest number of legislative candidates behind Kabila's Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP). Kashala said he eventually mounted what he considered a "very good campaign," and that voters responded positively to his message that "the Congo belongs to the Congolese."

¶4. (C) Declaring himself to be an "emerging leader" in the DRC, Kashala claimed his campaign has been approached by representatives for both Kabila and Bemba regarding post-election alliances. Kashala said he has made no commitments yet as to who he might support in a second round of voting since there is no final vote count. Kashala added that he is "looking forward to the results" and will not make any decisions until after the CEI announces final vote tallies. (Note: The CEI will announce provisional presidential results no later than August 20. End note.)

¶5. (C) Kashala warned, however, that a contest between Kabila and Bemba would be "difficult," as both men are antagonistic towards each other. Kashala said neither side will be willing to accept the fact that the other won the election. Consequently, even though widespread violence did not take place before the July 30 elections, Kashala said there is "much more potential" for it afterwards, particularly since both Bemba and Kabila maintain private militias. Kashala pointedly referred to several pre-election incidents between Kabila's and Vice President Azarias Ruberwa's security forces in Kinshasa, in addition to the violence perpetrated by Bemba supporters July 27 in the capital, as evidence that "serious problems" could occur.

¶6. (C) Kashala pointed as well to what he considered to be many cases of likely "fraud" in the July 30 elections. Kashala said he agreed with Vice President Ruberwa's "clear" allegations (ref A) that voting operations were marred by "irregularities" that may have had an adverse impact on the election. Kashala said he had evidence of "grave issues" concerning the vote, including pictures he had been shown of ballots marked in his favor being found on the street, and

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the television broadcast of used ballots allegedly being burned. Kashala further claimed he had evidence of police officers and soldiers voting in certain Kinshasa polling stations. (Note: The DRC's electoral law prohibits active military and police officers from voting. End note.) Kashala also said some members of the government had effectively "embezzled" funds to use in their political campaigns.

¶7. (C) Kashala promised he would be staying in the DRC now that he is involved in the country's political affairs. (Note: Kashala has lived in the U.S. since 1987. End note.) Kashala said he "looks forward to playing a role" in the development and reconstruction of the Congo, and is especially interested in reducing the country's child mortality rate and in increasing the availability of potable water. Kashala said he wants to change people's perception of the government, which has not provided anything for them in the last five years. He added that the USG has not been deeply involved in the DRC and needs to be more engaged if the country is to succeed.

¶8. (C) Comment: Kashala is a political player to watch in the weeks ahead. While no official election results are not yet known, initial indications suggest that he won a significant amount of votes in the Kasais and may have come in third in Kinshasa. If there is a second round, the two candidates will certainly want his endorsement. Kashala has made it clear he is waiting to see who is left standing when the dust settles after the first round; whoever he allies with later may just be a question of who can offer him the best deal--again, assuming there is a second round. In any case, Kashala has told others he is already planning for the next presidential election in 2011, and hopes to exert influence until then through UREC's anticipated seats in the National Assembly. End comment.

¶9. (U) CODEL Payne did not have an opportunity to clear on this cable before departing the DRC.
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